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SUBJECT: MCNS AUGUST 21

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Daniel V. Speckhard for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S//REL GBR AUS) SUMMARY: During the August 21 Ministerial Council on National Security, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki emphasized the importance of civil support for the Baghdad Security operations; called for the reform of the Facilities Protection Service; and approved Iraqi assumption of security control in Dhi Qar Province in September. Maliki also ordered preparations for Iraq to take over responsibility for Abu Ghraib prison and reaffirmed his support for the new Security Committee in Basra. The Foreign Minister raised allegations of improper coalition treatment of female Iraqi detainees. Ministers discussed threat information and format for security discussion with the Council of Representatives. END SUMMARY.

BAGHDAD SECURITY

12. (S//REL GBR AUS) During the weekly briefing on Baghdad security, Maliki underlined that the military action must be complemented by vigorous Iraqi efforts to implement reconstruction projects. Iraq will spend ten million dollars on clean-up and beautification, with the Ministry of Finance exempting Baghdad from some internal controls in order to facilitate obligation of funds, despite concern over corruption. Maliki warned of friction with the Baghdad Provincial Council, as the Council insisted on setting spending priorities. Maliki specified that the Planning Minister should take the lead in resolving these problems and pushing forward.

13. (S//REL GBR AUS) Lieutenant General Fry underlined the importance of Iraqi leaders visiting Baghdad neighborhoods. He said that it is vital to reinforce military operations with civil action and coalition forces are ready to facilitate. Fry suggested that an inter-ministerial group visit each newly cleared area to ensure that cleanup and reconstruction activities follow promptly on the heels of the military operation. Integrated Baghdad security operations, could serve as a model for future operations in Ramadi and other areas, he concluded.

14. (S//REL GBR AUS) Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh agreed that the Baghdad security operations offered lessons that needed to be studied and applied elsewhere. Charge summed up: the Prime Minister and senior Iraqi officials need to show as much interest in civil activities as security operations. He called for Ministers and deputies to visit communities to spur reconstruction and renewed economic activity. The Iraqi people would respond positively to such efforts.

FACILITIES PROTECTION SERVICE

¶5. (S//REL GBR AUS) Maliki raised the need to reform the Facilities Protection Service. He described the FPS as militia for government ministries. The Prime Minister said he wanted to isolate bad elements of the FPS and form new units composed of vetted and trained members. These units could be sent to useful assignments such as guarding pipelines, borders and power lines.

¶6. (S//REL GBR AUS) Foreign Minister Zebari defended the FPS. Why disrupt these units and the ministries they protect? Maliki responded by listing well-known problems: FPS is alleged to be responsible for murders and kidnappings; it has too many personnel; and it is plagued by absenteeism.

DHI QAR READY FOR TRANSFER

¶7. (S//REL GBR AUS) It was announced that Dhi Qar province is ready for the transfer of security responsibility to Iraq. The transfer will take place on September 24. The ceremony would take place on the last workday before Ramadan, September 21.

ABU GHRAIB

¶8. (S//REL GBR AUS) Maliki said he wanted to ensure that the upcoming hand-over of Abu Ghraib prison to Iraqi control will go smoothly. He instructed Minister of Defense Abdul Qader al-Mufraji to ensure that adequate Iraqi forces would be in place. Abu Ghraib's important equipment must be protected, he cautioned.

BASRA

¶9. (S//REL GBR AUS) Maliki reinforced his support for the new

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Security Council in Basra. He said that two senior Officials from Prime Minister's Office and National Security Council would be sent to Basra to assist in its work. Maliki stressed that Iraqi military and police leaders in Basra must do everything possible to support the Joint Committee.

ABUSE ALLEGATIONS

¶10. (S//REL GBR AUS) Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said that he had been asked by the Minister of Human Rights to raise allegations that male U.S. soldiers had photographed four naked female Iraqi prisoners. He said that the Ministry of Human Rights had prepared a report with photographs that could have explosive potential if it became public. MNF-I's General Casey undertook to investigate the issue and report back, cautioning against treating unsubstantiated allegation as fact.

THREAT INFORMATION

¶11. (S//REL GBR AUS) Iraqi National Intelligence Service Director General Muhammad al-Shawani said the Muhajadin Shura Council planned to counter the Baghdad Security Operations with car bomb and suicide bomber attacks. They would also attempt operations outside Baghdad and planned to attack the Haditha and Tharthar Dams. If these dams were damaged, Rusafa and Sadr City could be inundated as in the 1954 Tigris flood. Al Qaeda also planned to poison the Baghdad water supply. Shawani also said insurgents intended to attack Najaf Shrines to incite Shia militia reprisals. The MCNS agreed on the importance of receiving this intelligence and ensuring that adequate forces were protecting vulnerable sites and were put on alert.

CONTACT WITH COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

¶12. (S//REL GBR AUS) The Prime Minister suggested that an observer from Council Of Representatives' Defense and Security Committee be allowed to attend MCNS meeting, saying that he was responding to a proposal from the Council of

Representatives. The idea met with strong objections from most Ministers on Constitutional grounds, as well as reasons of operational security. UK Ambassador Asquith suggested establishing a dialogue between Ministers and Council of Representatives members on security topics as an alternative.

SPECKHARD